



11th September 2023

Dear Parent/Carer

I am writing to remind you of the school's policy regarding absence.

In accordance with the The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006, every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school (not by the parents), as either Authorised or Unauthorised. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required, preferably in writing.

Here at Sithney Primary School we recognise that regular and punctual attendance is vitally important in raising achievement and in developing the potential of all children.

The majority of pupils at Sithney Primary School achieve over 96% attendance, and this is the minimum attendance the school expects from all of our children. We recognise that there are occasions when it is appropriate to authorise an absence, such as when a pupil is genuinely too ill to attend school or has a medical appointment that cannot be taken outside of school hours. However, we depend on your support as parents and carers to enable our children to have the best chance at achieving and fulfilling their potential. This is why we are confident you will assist us in our drive to raise the bar with our school attendance this year.

Please be aware we will be working closely with the Local Authority Education Welfare Officer to ensure that no child is disadvantaged by poor attendance. You will be aware that we have made some small changes to our school Attendance Policy last year and we would encourage you to re-familiarise yourselves with the changes at your earliest convenience.

Unauthorised absences are those which the school under guidance from the Education Welfare Officer does not consider reasonable and for which no "leave", explanation or medical evidence has been given. This type of absence can lead to the Local Authority using sanctions and/or legal proceedings.

Please note that we may not authorise absence for any pupil after they have accrued 7% absence, unless the absence is supported by medical evidence and/or health practitioners' information that the absence was necessary. Should this apply to your child, we will of course notify you in writing in the first instance.

Taking holidays in term time will affect your child's schooling as much as any other absence and we expect parents to help us by not taking children away during term time. Remember that any savings you think you may make by taking a holiday in school time are offset by the cost to your child's education. There is no automatic entitlement in law to time off in school time to go on holiday and the government made an amendment to the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 in September 2013 to reflect this.

Therefore, all applications must be made in writing to the Head Teacher at least 10 school days prior to the requested leave date and parents must ensure that any exceptional circumstance and

supporting evidence is attached with the application. Where the Headteacher's decision is not to authorise leave in term time, school will inform parent/carers in writing. A general guide for parent's, is leave for any holiday, activity or event that could be arranged during the annual 13 week holiday time would not be authorised.

If your child is absent from school without authorisation, you will be committing an offence under the Education Act 1996. We may submit a request to Cornwall Council for a Penalty Notice to be issued, in accordance with Sections 444A and 444B of the said Act. Penalty Notices are issued per liable parent, per child and each carry a fine of £60 if paid within 21 days or £120 if paid after this but within 28 days. Failure to pay the Penalty Notice may result in legal action. Absence not authorised by the school may result in a prosecution in the Magistrates' Court under Section 444(1) or Section 444(1A) of the Education act 1996, leading to a fine of up to £2,500 and/or a custodial sentence. Cornwall Council may also apply for the costs incurred in taking the matter to Court.

In addition, we would like to remind you that the law requires pupils to attend school regularly and this includes arriving on time each day. A pupil who arrives 5 minutes late each day will have missed 3 entire days of school by the end of the year. Good punctuality at school is essential for pupils to achieve their full educational potential. It is also vital for pupils to form good habits for later life. Persistent lateness may also result in you being served with a Penalty Notice or a summons to court. Parents have a duty to ensure their child's regular attendance at school and failure to do so is an offence under Section 444(1) of the Education Act 1996.

Our attendance policy can be found on our website. You are welcome to contact the school to discuss any concerns you may have regarding this or if you feel you would like advice or support in helping your child attend more regularly. Sithney Primary School is committed to maximising the education of all its pupils and aims to work with parents to ensure this can be achieved.

Yours sincerely

Linda May (Executive Head) & Helen Neil (Head of School)